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COMMUNITY VALUES SERVICE

# \$1.02 Million Block Grant to Fund Extra Air Is Tabled for Now

## State Adds Two New Conditions

BY PETER SHELTON

MONTROSE — A Region 10 Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$1.02 million is still in the offing to enable Extra Aircraft to begin building airplanes in Montrose, but negotiations are ongoing, and "the clock is running," according to Montrose County Commissioner David White.

A March 24 phone conference among representatives of the Montrose Economic Development Corporation, Montrose County, Region 10, and the state's Financial Review Committee started the clock on a 90-day review period, according to White.

The FRC tabled approval of the loan pending clarification of several details in the agreements, and with two new conditions.

The first condition is that the Federal Aviation Administration grant type-certification of the EA500 aircraft (the six-seat, carbon-fiber, business-class, turbo-prop that Extra plans to build in a Montrose facility). A March 25 release by the county stated: "Since US testing is now complete and European testing is wrapping up, European certification of the aircraft with its new Avidyne avionics package is expected within several weeks, and US FAA certification is expected shortly thereafter, the FRC requested that FAA type-certification of the aircraft become a condition of the loan."

The second condition regards details of the loan match. Again from the county release: "MEDC will convey its two lots in the Aero-

space Industrial Park to Extra. A private investor will then lend Extra Aircraft \$1.5 million secured by the property. The state requested that the agreement be provided to Region 10 and thence to the FRC as evidence of the loan match before loan funds are disbursed.

"Unchanged was the condition that Montrose County and Extra Aircraft agree on a short-term (four-year or two-two year) lease of existing airport hangar facilities to correspond with the four-year term of the loan. The executed loan documents are to be provided to Region 10 and thence to the FRC. Though negotiations for the construction and long-term lease of new facilities on the airport are ongoing between the County and Extra, finalization of that arrangement is not a condition of the loan."

When reached for comment by *The Watch*, Commissioner White expressed surprise. "Some of this was news to us," he said. "We're still in negotiations with Extra" for use of county-owned lots on the airport property. The proposed deed of MEDC lots to Extra, while a feature of the original agreement bringing Extra to Montrose, was troubling to White. "Ken Keith (Extra Aircraft's president and CEO) told us he didn't want to be off-airport. That would mean having to operate 'through the fence,' operating from private onto public property." However, Sandy Head, MEDC's executive director, told *The Watch* that Keith in fact requested a "through the fence" agreement in February. Head said she believed that best way for Extra to move forward and begin producing airplanes here was to seek both the on-airport lease and ownership of the off-site lots. "If we would have followed through with

the July agreement, we would have 100 new jobs in Montrose now," she said.

White said he expects commissioners will have a draft lease for use of the on-airport lots ready for Extra by the end of this week.

The county's March 25 release went on to say, "As time was short, the FRC tabled a final decision on the loan until the details of the new/amended conditions could be described and the additional information provided. Neither the capability and financial strength of Extra Aircraft, nor the quality of its products, nor the security for the loan were questioned. The importance of this loan for the economic recovery of Montrose County, now suffering with 13 percent unemployment, was unchallenged."

"Although the loan wasn't approved at this meeting, Office of Economic Development and International Trade Director Dwayne Romero and Deputy Director Alice Kotlik stated that they are anxious to get these items resolved quickly so that 'we can get to yes' on this loan. Region 10 anticipates that approval of the loan with the new/amended conditions will follow shortly."

The \$1.02 million loan would be the largest ever approved by the state's CDBG program.

Region 10 League for Economic Assistance and Planning is a six-county (Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, Ouray, Hinsdale and San Miguel) non-profit organization that, in addition to the Enterprise center, operates the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), coordinates regional transportation planning, and operates a small business loan program. To learn more about Region 10, call 970/249-2436.



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)  
ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT  
OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD  
FOR THE ARGENTINE-ST. LOUIS TUNNEL/PONDS REMOVAL SITE  
APPROXIMATELY 1.5 MILES NORTH OF RICO, DOLORES COUNTY, CO

The Administrative Record (AR) for the Argentine-St. Louis Tunnel/Ponds Removal Site includes all information used during the decision-making process that led to the environmental response at the site, including the selection of the Removal Action. Other documents, including the comments received on the Administrative Record and EPA's response to significant comments, may be added at a later date.

EPA encourages the public to review and comment on the documents. The Administrative Record is available at the Information Repositories listed below:

Rico Town Hall  
2 N. Commercial Street  
Rico, CO 81332  
Contact: Mike England  
Town Manager  
970-967-2863

Hours: Mon - Thur  
8 - noon, 1 - 5 pm

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 8 Headquarters  
Records Center  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202

Hours: M - Fr  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Comments on the Administrative Record may be submitted in writing for the next 30 days to:

Steve Way  
On-Scene Coordinator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
8EPR-SA  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202-1129

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which means there's no early departure either. I can't leave Telluride until around noon, which means I arrive on the East Coast after 11 p.m., which means I'm not in bed before midnight. Not fun. I sure would like to be able to leave TEX at 8 or 9 so I could arrive at my destination early enough to get a good night's sleep and make the most of the next day.

Then there's the return home. I have to get a flight at dawn in Florida, departing at 6 a.m., wake up at 4 a.m. or earlier, in order to catch a flight to TEX. This is 2 a.m. Telluride time. So I arrive home dead tired and lose another full day. If I could leave Florida at, say 10 a.m. or even noon and still reach Telluride the same day, what an improvement that would be!

You might say that I knew Telluride was inaccessible when I moved here, so I should suck it up. I might as easily say to those who live near the airport and oppose night flights that they chose to live

near an airport and so they should suck it up. These retorts, it seems to me, cancel each other out and are irrelevant to our present moment. Times change and just as Telluride need not remain as inaccessible as it was twenty or thirty years ago, so might an airport add service over that same period. Just as Telluride will never be exactly easy to get to, so the airport - serving a small community - will never be so busy that it will truly be obnoxious.

In any case, I have sucked it up for years, accepting the fact that it's not easy to get here. But the fact is, it doesn't have to stay this way because there is a potential solution: night flights at TEX.

If we allowed night flights year-round there could be an early morning flight out of here, a night arrival back home, and suddenly it would no longer be so debilitating to get to and from the East Coast and Telluride.

Keeping it personal, just as the residents of Aldasoro and Last Dollar ask, "Please don't disturb me with additional noise over my house

between the hours of 6 and 8 in winter," I ask them, "May I please disturb you by having the possibility of arriving home to TEX at 8 p.m.?"

And the question becomes, which of us is more inconvenient? Which of us would be suffering the greater imposition?

If asked to choose between an inconvenience to me and to others in my situation and an inconvenience to people who live near the airport, how is a decision-maker to decide? A little extra noise to some locals means a shorter trip to and from Telluride for others, locals and visitors alike. How are these impacts and benefits to be measured against each other?

So the discussion turns to other, seemingly bigger questions. Maybe allowing night flights would be unsafe. Maybe allowing them would break a solemn promise made thirty years ago. Maybe longer airport hours would fail to bring more commercial service, and so it wouldn't solve anybody's problem and we'd

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